

Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A topical composition comprising: ~~at least~~ about 5% to about 25% (w/v) ascorbic acid; a non-toxic zinc salt; and water, wherein
the composition has a pH of about 3.5 to about 4.1; and
the composition is prepared by a process comprising:
 - (a) dissolving about 10% to about 50% of the ascorbic acid in water at a temperature of between about 60°C to about 90°C to provide an aqueous ascorbic acid solution of at least 20% (w/v);
 - (b) cooling the aqueous ascorbic acid solution to below about 40°C;
 - (c) combining the aqueous ascorbic acid solution with water, a non-toxic zinc salt, and ascorbic acid to provide a mixture comprising water, a non-toxic zinc salt, and about 5% to about 25% (w/v) ascorbic acid; and
 - (d) adjusting the pH of the mixture to about 3.5 to about 4.1
~~at least 10% of the ascorbic acid is provided in the composition as a concentrated ascorbic acid solution which is prepared by heating ascorbic acid in water to about 60° to about 90° C and cooling to below about 40° C to provide a concentrated ascorbic acid solution, wherein the composition is adjusted to a pH of about 3.5 to about 4.1.~~
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 1, wherein the composition has a pH of about 3.7 to about 4.0 and the pH is adjusted to about 3.7 to about 4.0 in step (d).
4. (Original) The composition of claim 1, further comprising an anti-inflammatory compound.

5. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 4, wherein the anti-inflammatory compound ~~is a~~ includes sulfur-containing anti-inflammatory compound.
6. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 5, wherein the sulfur-containing anti-inflammatory compound is ~~selected from the group consisting of~~ cystine, cysteine, N-acetylcysteine, glutathione, cysteamine, S-methylcysteine, or methionine ~~and mixtures thereof~~.
7. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 4, wherein the anti-inflammatory compound ~~includes~~ is an aminosugar.
8. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 7, wherein the aminosugar ~~is~~ includes glucosamine, mannosamine, N-acetylmannosamine, galactosamine, glucosamine-6-phosphate, N-acetylglucosamine, N-acetylmannosamine, or N-acetylgalactosamine ~~and mixtures thereof~~.
9. (Canceled)
10. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 1, wherein the water is ~~selected from the group consisting of~~ distilled water, deionized water, or distilled deionized water ~~and mixtures thereof~~.
11. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 1, wherein the non-toxic zinc salt is present in the topical composition in an amount ranging from about 0.5% to about 5% (w/v).
12. (Original) The composition of claim 11, wherein the non-toxic zinc salt is zinc sulfate.
- 13-14. (Canceled)
15. (Original) The composition of claim 1, wherein the water is distilled or deionized water.

16. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 1, further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

17. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 15, wherein the pharmaceutically acceptable carrier is ~~includes~~ alkylene glycol, hydroxyalkylcellulose or a mixture thereof.

18-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 1 ~~18~~, further comprising a stimulant of protein synthesis.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 1 ~~18~~, further comprising a precursor of melanin synthesis.

24. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 1 ~~18~~, ~~further~~ comprising about 15% to about 25% (w/v) ascorbic acid.

25. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 1 ~~18~~, wherein the topical composition is an aqueous solution, a serum, a lotion, an ointment, a cream, or a gel.

26-35. (Canceled)

36. (New) The composition of claim 1, comprising about 10% to about 25% (w/v) ascorbic acid.